HONORS STUDIES CONTRACT

While most Honors Studies Scholars complete the requirements at FLCC by taking Honors Studies courses, it is entirely possible to transfer Honors Studies methodologies to other courses to continue your reflection and scholarship. Once you have taken a face-to-face Honors Studies course, you have the opportunity to seek partial completion of Honors Studies requirements through the use of an Honors Studies contract.

This contract will enrich your experience in a non-Honors Studies class by establishing a complementary reflective study alongside your regular coursework. Course credit remains the same for the class, but 'Honors' is added to the course title on your transcript upon successful completion. *Please note: you may only work on one contract per semester and no more than two contracts can be completed as part of your Honors Studies Scholar requirements.*

Fulfilling an Honors Studies Contract consists of three components:

- A learning journal consisting of at least 500-words per week that earns an average of 'Meeting' on the rubric
- A final reflective essay which earns an average of 'Meeting' on the rubric (shared with the course instructor)
- Communication with the Honors Studies Director periodically over the course of the semester

The following contract must be filled out and received by the Director of Honors Studies no later than 4:00PM on the third Friday of the semester for approval. When your Honors Studies Contract work is completed at the end of the semester, it will be assessed according to the provided rubrics and, if satisfactory, the Director will initiate the change on your transcript to reflect Honors Studies designation for the course.

I, _____, agree to the terms of this Honors Contract.

(print your name)

I intend to do the work required to earn Honors points for the following non-honors course:

_____ taught by _____

(course #, section #, semester/year) **(print Instructor's name)**

_____ _____

(your signature) **(Instructor's signature)**

_____ _____

(your preferred e-mail address) **(student ID #)**

_____

Honors Studies Director's signature **Approval Date**

Writing / Keeping a Reflective Journal

As you think about journaling throughout the semester or after an event, the follow prompts might help you to focus your writing and find a place from which to begin your thinking.

- I am/was most excited to learn… I am/was most anxious about…
- The first thing that comes to mind when I think about this topic is….
- I took this class / went to this event because….
- The thing I am most curious or confused about is…
- My ideas about this course topic or event come from/are informed by…
- I hope to connect this to my academic/professional/personal life through…
- I'm interested in this topic because I want to find out…
- An example of how it is affecting/will affect the way I think, act, or feel in the world is…
- Probably the most compelling/disturbing/lingering question raised by this topic is….
- My hopes/goals for the remainder of the semester/ assignment are…
- In the process of completing this task or assignment/participating in this event, I noticed…
- Compared with my expectations, this class/event/assignment/topic was…
- The biggest risk I took in completing this assignment or going to this event was…
- The next time I encounter a project like this one, I might do a few things differently, namely…
- Overall, the most meaningful/surprising thing I learned from this was…
- Identify and reflect on specific moments in which something significant occurred (a realization, an obstacle overcome, a setback encountered, etc.).
- How did your experience as a learner in this course/event complement or complicate your personal habits, behaviors, and personality traits?
- What prior skills and experiences did you bring to the course/event which either helped or hindered your learning process or your participation?
- How did your initial preconceptions and expectations of the course or topic compare with what actually happened or what you learned?
- Describe your feelings and emotions about aspects of the course or event. When/about what did you feel most comfortable? Most uncomfortable? Why?
- What three aspects of the course or event were most beneficial to your learning process? Why?
- What experiments or risks did you take in this class? Discuss strategies that worked as well as those that you tried but abandoned.
- What was new or unique about this learning experience? How did you respond?
- Discuss any ethical considerations that the course or topic prompted.
- How did non-academic issues and events affect your learning process this semester or your ability to focus at the event?
- Under what conditions were you most productive and receptive to learning? What conditions were you least?

The above ideas and suggestions are based on common assessment practices advocated by Linda Suskie, Director of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; Bard College's Institute for Thinking and Writing (IWT); and the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), and texts such as John Bean's Engaging Ideas: Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom, and Nedra Reynolds and Rich Rice's guide, Portfolio Teaching. The list was compiled by Curt Nehring Bliss and modified by Trista Merrill.

Honors Studies CONTRACT Journal Rubric

	Not acceptable	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding
Reflection: Does the journal take the author's internal learning experience as its topic? Does the journal examine some aspect of the learning experience in depth?	The journal makes only broad, unsupported, or generic statements about the learning experience. Specific examples are missing or underdeveloped.	The journal demonstrates some consideration of the learning experience, but needs to be more fully developed.	The journal examines the author's learning experience in the course through consideration of specific, well-developed examples.	The journal examines the author's learning experience with unusual depth and precision. Examples are complex and original.
Self-evaluation: Does the journal identify the author's underlying values, beliefs, and/or assumptions about learning and the self? Does the journal identify strengths and weaknesses, including plans for using these in future work?	The journal does not evaluate the author's learning experience, or does so in only a superficial way. It identifies nothing specific about the learner's experience.	The journal identifies some specific aspects of the learner's experience, but needs to be more fully developed.	The journal identifies the author's underlying beliefs, values, and/or assumptions. It identifies and evaluates the author's strengths and weaknesses.	The journal is exceptionally perceptive and/or insightful in its examination of the author's learning experience.
Analysis: Does the journal link the current experience with learning experiences in other courses and other settings? Does the journal draw conclusions about these linkages?	Specific links to other courses and learning experiences are missing or underdeveloped.	The journal makes some links to other courses and learning experiences, but needs to be more fully developed.	The journal links the author's learning experience to experiences in other courses and settings. The journal makes at least some conclusions about these linkages.	The journal uses links with other learning experiences to draw conclusions that are original and supported in a way that demonstrates analytical sophistication.
Use of scholarly tradition: Does the author grapple with relevant terms and concepts from the discipline? Does journal engage with arguments and ideas of the field?	The journal does not use the relevant terms and concepts, or it uses them incorrectly. The journal does not engage the arguments and ideas of the field.	Relevant terms and concepts are used, but not always correctly. Arguments and ideas of the field are engaged only superficially.	Relevant terms and concepts are used correctly in the journal. The journal engages with arguments and ideas of the field/discipline.	Terms, concepts, arguments and ideas are engaged in a sophisticated and scholarly fashion.

Honors Studies CONTRACT Reflective Essay

The **Honors Studies Reflective Essay** invites you to reflect on your role as learner and draw broader insights about your learning experiences. In order to do this, you are asked to explore three questions: First, *where have I come from?* By reflecting on your learning path before entering this specific Honors Studies experience, you are better situated to explore how far you have come. Second, *where am I now?* You can then reflect on this specific experience with its relevant concepts and how that relates to other experiences you have had as a learner in various courses and environments. Third, *where am I going?* This allows you to look forward to how you might apply what you've discovered about yourself to your future as a learner and a practitioner of a field. This essay will be evaluated according to the categories in the rubric provided.

You took this class as an Honors course, which invited you to think about and reflect on the content in a way that your classmates likely did not. As look back at the semester through your journal and the prompts laid out above, pay special attention to how the act of deliberate reflection changed your relationship with, and approach to, the material, yourself, your instructor, and even your classmates. Was this a good class for you to reflect on? Why or why not? How might the class have been different had you not engaged in your reflective journaling along the way? Did your reasons for choosing this class play out the way you expected them to? How was this experience influenced by your prior Honors experience(s)? In other words, fit this course and the reflective journal you kept into the intricate pathways you are taking on your journey as a learner.

	Not acceptable	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding
Reflection: *Does the essay take the author's internal learning experience as its topic? Does the essay examine some aspect of the learning experience in depth?*	The essay makes only broad, unsupported, or generic statements about the learning experience. Specific examples are missing or underdeveloped.	The essay demonstrates some consideration of the learning experience, but needs to be more fully developed.	The essay examines the author's learning experience in the contract course through consideration of specific, well-developed examples.	The essay examines the author's learning experience with unusual depth and precision. Examples are complex and original.
Self-evaluation: *Does the essay identify the author's underlying values, beliefs, and/or assumptions about learning and the self? Does the essay identify strengths and weaknesses, including plans for using these in future work?*	The essay does not evaluate the author's learning experience, or does so in only a superficial way. It identifies nothing specific about the learner's experience.	The essay identifies some specific aspects of the learner's experience, but needs to be more fully developed.	The essay identifies the author's underlying beliefs, values, and/or assumptions. It identifies and evaluates the author's strengths and weaknesses.	The essay is exceptionally perceptive and/or insightful in its examination of the author's learning experience.
Synthesis/Analysis: *Does the essay make linkages across different Honors activities and with other learning experiences? Does the essay draw conclusions about these linkages?*	Specific links between the contract course and other learning experiences are missing or underdeveloped.	The essay makes some linkages, but needs to be more fully developed.	The essay links the author's learning experience in the contract course with other learning experiences, and makes at least some conclusions about these linkages.	The essay uses synthesis to draw conclusions that are original and supported in a way that demonstrates analytical sophistication.
Use of scholarly tradition: *Does the author grapple with relevant terms and concepts from the discipline(s)? Does essay engage with arguments and ideas of the field(s)?*	The essay does not use the relevant terms and concepts, or it uses them incorrectly. The essay does not engage the arguments and ideas of the field(s).	Relevant terms and concepts are used, but not always correctly. Arguments and ideas of the field(s) are engaged only superficially.	Relevant terms and concepts are used correctly in the essay. The essay engages with arguments and ideas of the field/discipline(s).	Terms, concepts, arguments and ideas are engaged in a sophisticated and scholarly fashion.